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*Rest Days: A Study in Early Law and Morality.* HUTTON WEBSTER.  
The Macmillan Co.: New York, 1916. (Price \$3.00.)

The accounts in this book of market days, of lunar days and calendars, of holy days, of evil days and of a miscellany of days under taboo the general reader who is curious about his own holiday observances will find enlightening. The student will find the compilations of facts and of critical conclusions and the full bibliographical notes of convenience.

Were the student to expect anything more, he would be disappointed. No systematic attempt is made to ascertain relations between the data given and other cultural facts, for example, between economic or religious facts. Ethnological and psychological assertions are made, to be sure, but between the assertion and its context there is little or no connection. It may be true, for example, that "the connection of the rest day with the farmers' pursuits is secondary rather than direct" (p. 102), but the pages which follow on market days supply no proof of that generalization. The author is inclined to assume that the belief in death pollution is earlier than the belief in death spirits (p. 63), but he does not say why. Nor does he say why he assumes that memorial rites for the dead or exorcising rites are "massed and assigned to particular times" to meet "a demand for order and precision" (p. 75). For one of his assertions or assumptions he explicitly promises evidence.

It is reasonable to suppose that, with the deepening sense of social solidarity, observances once confined to the individual alone, or to his immediate connections, would often pass over into rites performed by the community at large. Some evidence tending to substantiate this opinion will be presented incidentally as the investigation proceeds (p. 7).

The promised evidence proves to be further assumption (pp. 25, 38-9, 63).

Other generalizations occur which are not even illustrated by facts. For example,

The institution of taboo, in its individualistic aspects, has helped to nurse in man a sense of reverence, a power of self-restraint greatly needed under primitive conditions (p. 60).

We might almost infer from this passage, not to speak of others, that Dr. Webster had paid no attention to herd psychology and that it had never occurred to him that a sense of reverence might be in itself a primitive condition.

Consideration of the tabooed day as an expression of gregariousness Dr. Webster might well have found profitable. We should like to know,

for example, what connection there is, if any, between communal rest days and communal activities. But the only way to ascertain the existence of such a connection or the lack of it would be not by psychological assertion, but by the statistical case method or something like it, by the Tylor-Steinmetz method of noting the concomitance in every culture of the facts in question or the lack of concomitance. The method of illustrating a generalization favored by Dr. Webster and others leaves us just where we were.

That Dr. Webster is a devout believer in cultural evolution he leaves us at no time in any doubt. His naïve use of the term "superstition" is the flag he waves incessantly in our face. But perhaps in no passage is his conviction as fully expressed as in the following:

The ancient dwellers in the Arabian wilderness, who celebrated new moon and full moon as seasons of abstinence and rest, little dreamed that in their senseless custom lay the roots of a social institution, which, on the whole, has contributed to human welfare in past ages and promises an even greater measure of benefit to humanity in all future times (p. 246).

Unless, may we comment, the whole psychosis of crisis, of the meaning of which Dr. Webster seems unaware, should as a cultural manifestation go entirely into the discard. (Will magic, another psychological factor in rest days, modern culture has already fairly well discarded.)

But it is development, not discard, which appeals to Dr. Webster. He is one to whom, as he puts it,

nothing is more interesting than the contemplation of that unconscious though beneficent process which has converted institutions, based partly or wholly on a belief in the imaginary and the supernatural, into institutions resting on the rock of reason and promoting human welfare (p. 307).

Who will say that the teleologist is a less happy man than the theologist—or a less fatuous?

ELSIE CLEWS PARSONS

*El Hombre Fósil*, HUGO OBERMAIER. Junta Para Ampliacion de Estudios e Investigaciones Cientificas. Madrid, 1916. Pp. xiv, 397. Numerous illustrations.

Dr. Obermaier is already well known to American anthropologists and prehistoric archaeologists as the author of *Der Mensch der Vorzeit*,<sup>1</sup> of which the present work might be considered as a revised and somewhat abridged Spanish edition. *El Hombre Fósil* is published as Memoir

<sup>1</sup> For review of this work, see *Current Anthropological Literature*, vol. II, pp. 131-138, 1913.